

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9935

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

MAMEMBASSY MADRID 577

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1945

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: LJS

TAGS: PINT, MR

SUBJ: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: FURTHER ACCOUNT OF NEW REGIMES FIRST
DEMARCHE

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 1906 (NOTAL), B. NOUAKCHOTT 1923 (NOTAL)

1. IN ADDITION TO THE ITEMS REPORTED IN REFTELS, MY JULY 12
CONVERSATIONS WITH ISMAEL OULD AMAR AND CHEIF OF STATE
MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALECK ELICITED THE FOLLOWING OPINIONS,
EXPLANATIONS AND INSIGHTS.

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2. OULD DADDAH: ACCORDING TO AMAR, NO ONE BUT OULD DADDAH
IS BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MISMANAGEMENT OF MAURITANIA.
IN RECENT MONTHS, HE CHOSE TO ISOLATE HIMSELF FROM REALITY.
HE WAS UNWILLING TO TAKE ADVICE FROM ANYONE EXCEPT HIS WIFE.
EVEN AHMED OULD MOHAMED SALAH (WHO ACTED AS HEAD OF
STATE IN OULD DADDAH'S ABSENCE) DID NOT HAVE THE PRESIDENT'S

EAR, MUCH LESS FORMER FONMIN MOUKNASS. IT IS PROBABLY REFLECTIVE OF THE NEW REGIME'S DISDAIN FOR MRS. OULD DADDAH AND HER PROGRESSIVE ORIENTATION THAT AMAR REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO HER BY HER ORIGINAL CHRISTIAN NAME MARIE THERESE IN SPITE OF HER MUCH PUBLICIZED CONVERSION TO ISLAM AND ADOPTION OF THE NAME MIRIAM. BECAUSE OF HER INFLUENCE OULD DADDAH PLACED TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE ON THE DEMANDS OF RELATIVELY FEW AND UNREPRESENTATIVE PRESSURE GROUPS SUCH AS LEFT WING YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS. HE OPINED THAT QUOTE OULD DADDAH WAS NOT OF THIS AGE END QUOTE AND THAT HE EITHER REFUSED OR WAS INCAPABLE OF DEALING WITH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

3. REPRISALS: AMAR VOLUNTEERED THAT THERE WAS NO CURRENT INTENTION TO HOLD PUBLIC TRIALS NOR WAS THE NEW REGIME INTERESTED IN REPRISALS (FYI - WE HAVE LEARNED THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO CONFISCATING REAL PROPERTY HOLDINGS AND ANY OTHER AVAILABLE ASSETS OF FORMER MINISTERS IN OULD DADDAH'S CABINET). AMAR STATED THAT NONE OF THE MINISTERS IS BEHIND BARS. RATHER THEY ARE UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND MOST WILL BE FREE TO GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS WITHIN DAYS. OULD DADDAH HIMSELF WILL NOT BE HARMED AND WILL BE RELEASED AS SOON AS THE NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ARE INSTALLED. HE WILL BE FREE TO REMAIN IN MAURITANIA UNMOLESTED. MRS. OULD DADDAH WILL NOT BE WELCOME.

4. CIVIL SERVICE: THE CAREER BUREAUCRACY WILL
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REMAIN INTACT. REGIONAL DELEGATES (FORMERLY CALLED GOVERNORS) OF THE THIRTEEN GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS HAVE NOT BEEN REPLACED, HOWEVER, THEIR FORMER COORDINATOR ALI CHERIF, THE FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY IS STILL UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND WILL NOT BE RETAINED IN THE CIVIL SERVICE. THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL REMAIN HOWEVER.

5. INTERIM GOVERNMENT: THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT COMPRISES THREE ELEMENTS:
A) THE MILITARY COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN OFFICERS (SEE NOUAKCHOK 1883);
B) THE COMMITTEE OF TWENTY-TWO MADE UP OF BUSINESSMEN, FORMER POLITICAL FIGURES AND PROFESSIONALS, ALL OF WHOM ARE CONSERVATIVE PROPONENTS OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE; AND
C) THE CABINET.
AT THE MOMENT, AT LEAST, IT APPEARS THAT THE COMMITTEE OF TWENTY-TWO IS THE DOMINANT GROUP BUT THIS COULD CHANGE AS THE MILITARY BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO POWER.

6. STEPS TOWARDS NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS: WITHIN A FEW DAYS THE COMMITTEE WILL EXPANDED TO A FIFTY OR SO AMTAR CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY WHICH WILL THEORETICALLY REPRESENT ALL

ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY. THE ASSEMBLY'S FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE TO DRAFT NEW CONSTITUTION AND ESTABLISH THE MEANS OF HOLDING FREE ELECTIONS UNDER A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM. NO DECREE OR LAW CAN BE PUT INTO EFFECT WITHOUT THE ASSEMBLY'S RATIFICATION. TIMING OF ANY ELECTIONS WILL DEPEND UPON HOW SOON THE VOTING LISTS CAN BE BROUGHT UP TO DATE.

7. ECONOMIC POLICY: AMAR SAID THAT MAURITANIANS ARE MERCHANTS BY TRADITION. SOCIALISM IS FOREIGN TO THEM. THE FIRST STEP OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE TO ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC POLICY AND INVESTMENT CODE BASED ON THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM WITH A MINIMUM OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL. FOREIGN PARTICIPATION WILL BE INVITED.

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8. CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION: AMAR DESCRIBED FINANCIAL SITUATION AS CATASTROPHIC BUT THAT BUDGET COULD BE BALANCED IF OUTSTANDING DEBT COULD BE RESTRUCTURED. CURRENT DEBT

SERVICE RUNS TO US DOLS. 50 MILLION PER ANNUM WHICH IS BEYOND MAURITANIA'S CAPACITY. THE WORLD BANK RECENTLY ESTIMATED THAT RESTRUCTURING THE DEBT WOULD REQUIRE A NEW LOAN OF US DOLS. 200 MILLION. AMAR STATED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE MONEY ITSELF. MAURITANIA NEEDS TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO HELP PUT ITS FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER. KRYZA

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